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Message Text

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53
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 IO-13 SSM-03 SAM-01 ACDA-07 OMB-01 /048 W
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O P 171400Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1803
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 102
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
CIA WASHDC
COMSIXTHFLT
COMPHIBRON SIX
COM THREE FOUR MAU
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7511

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION SEPTEMBER 17

REF: BEIRUT 7491

1. SARKIS, ARAFAT AND SYRIAN REPRESENTATIVE EXPECTED
MEET SEP 17 IN CHTAURA. ACTING PM CHAMOUN SAYS CABINET
WILL MEET SEP 20. CHAMOUN SAYS SARKIS TAKEOVER WILL
ELIMINATE NEED FOR PRESENT EXTENT OF SYRIAN MILITARY AND
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POLITICAL SUPPORT. LEBANESE POLITICIANS CONTINUE PRE-

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INAUGURAL CONSULTATIONS IN LEBANON AND ABROAD. GROUND SITUATION GENERALLY CALM, THOUGH UNSTABLE. MINOR CLASHES AND BOMBARDMENTS REPORTED. END SUMMARY.

2. TRIPARTITE MEETING. SARKIS, ARAFAT AND EMISSARY OF ASSAD EXPECTED MEET IN CHTAURA SEP 17 WITH AL REP HASSAN SABRI KHOLI. AFTER MEETING SEP 16 WITH FRANGIE AND CHAMOUN, AL DEPUTY KHOLI ANNOUNCES SARKIS WILL REPRESENT "ALL THE LEBANESE." FRANGIE TELLS KHOLI HE "WILLING TO ACCEPT ANYTHING ACCEPTED BY SARKIS AT CHTAURA," BUT ADDS, "THERE WILL BE NO NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PALESTINIANS BEFORE A CEASE-FIRE, PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM BATTLEFIELDS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CAIRO AGREEMENT." PRESS SPECULATES DISCUSSIONS AT CHTAURA WILL COVER GENERAL CEASE-FIRE; STATIONING OF AL FORCES; APPLICATION OF CAIRO ACCORDS; AND WITHDRAWAL OF PALESTINIANS FROM MOUNTAINS. L'ORIENT LE JOUR QUOTES CHAMOUN AND AS SAFIR QUOTES AL DEPUTY KHOLI THAT IF MEETING "SUCCESSFUL," SARKIS, ARAFAT AND ASSAD HIMSELF MIGHT MEET IN DAMASCUS, BEFORE OR AFTER SARKIS VISIT TO CAIRO. AN NAHAR QUOTES PFLP-GC SPOKESMAN ABU AL ABBAS THAT PFLP-GC IS "AGAINST THE SOFAR MEETING, THE DAMASCUS AGREEMENT AND THE CHTAURA MEETING,"

3. CABINET TO MEET. NEW ACTING PREMIER CHAMOUN SAYS CABINET WILL MEET SEP 20 AT KFOUR. MEETING WILL BE FIRST SINCE LATE MARCH. L'ORIENT LE JOUR DESCRIBES CHAMOUN AS SEEKING PLAY DOWN IMPORTANCE OF CABINET SHAKEUP, SAYING CABINET PLAYS ONLY EPHEMERAL ROLE ANYWAY AND CRITICIZING KARAME, STILL IN CAIRO, FOR "NEGATIVISM" AND "ABSENTISM." HE SAYS KARAME FAILED TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS EARLIER PORTFOLIOS. CHAMOUN SAYS EITHER HE OR KARAME WILL PRESENT RESIGNATION OF GOVERNMENT ON SEP 24 TO SARKIS.

4. CHAMOUN ON THE FUTURE. IN CBS INTERVIEW, CHAMOUN SAYS AFTER SARKIS INVESTITURE LEBANON WILL NOT NECESSARILY NEED TOTAL MILITARY AND POLITICAL SUPPORT FROM SYRIA: "WE ARE STRONG ENOUGH TO TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN AFFAIRS." IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON IDEA OF SECURITY TREATY WITH SYRIA, CHAMOUN REFERS TO CONFIDENTIAL

"SECURITY COOPERATION." HE CALLED ON PALESTINIANS TO LAY DOWN ARMS OR LEAVE LEBANON. ASKED IF HE WOULD ATTEMPT PRESSURE SARKIS FROM NEW SUPERMINISTER POSITION, HE SAID "I ONLY EXERT PRESSURE ON THOSE WHO DO NOT WISH PEACE IN LEBANON."

5. POLITICAL CONTACTS. PIERRE GEMAYEL IN DAMASCUS ON SEP 16 ON WAY BACK TO LEBANON FOLLOWING CAIRO VISIT,

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MET WITH ASSAD IN DAMASCUS. GEMAYEL, DESPITE CABINET
PROBLEM, SAYS HE IS "VERY OPTIMISTIC." KATAEB CHIEF
SAYS HE EMPHASIZED TO SADAT AND ASSAD NEED FOR TRUE
DETERRENT FORCE IN LEBANON. SAEB SALAM MET SEP 16
IN CAIRO WITH SADAT AND FAHMI AND DUE IN RIYAD SEP 17.
RASHID KARAME, FORMER PM TAKIEDDINE SOLH, MUFTI
HASSAN KHALED AND JUNBLATT DEPUTY ABBAS KHALAF ALL IN
CAIRO. AN NAHAR REPORTS SEP 16 MEETING BETWEEN JUNBLATT,
IRAQI BAATH ALLY FAYIZ QAZZI AND AMINE GEMAYEL AT
JUDAIDA, FIRST JUNBLATT CONTACT WITH KATAEB FOR SEVERAL
WEEKS. THEY REPORTEDLY AGREED TRIPARTITE MEETING AT
CHTAURA SHOULD BE BEGINNING OF CESSATION OF FIGHTING.
SARKIS REPORTEDLY MET SEP 16 IN EASTERN ZONE WITH
PALESTINIAN DELEGATION.

6. GROUND SITUATION. MILITARY ACTION AT LOW LEVEL
COUNTRY WIDE. IN BEIRUT, BOMBARDMENTS OF RESIDENTIAL
AREAS HALTED BUT CLASHES REPORTED FROM CONFRONTATION
LINE. IN SUBURBS, HEAVY BOMBARDMENT REPORTED AT
HAZMIEH AND MINOR CLASHES IN CHIYAH/AIN EL-RUMMANEH AND
HADETH/LAYLAKI. IN MOUNTAINS, SPORADIC CLASHES AND
SHELLING CONNTINUES IN METN AND AT ALEY/KAHALE. IN THE
NORTH, TANK MOVEMENT REPORTED NEAR TRIPOLI AND CLASHES
IN ZGHORTA/RACHIINE/ALMA/CARMELITE AREA. ONLY
SIGNIFICANT MILITARY ACTION SEP 16 OCCURRED IN SOUTH
WHERE CHRISTIAN FORCES OF QULAYA CLASHED WITH LAA FROM
MARJAYUN. AL MOHARRIR SAYS SYRIAN FORCES AT SOFAR REINFORCED
BY ARMORED CARS SEP 16, BUT WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION. SYRIAN/
LEBANESE BORDER CLOSED TO TRAFFIC BOTH WAYS SEP 16; APPARENTLY
SECURITY MEASURE RELATED TO CHTAURA MEETING.
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